

Case Service Memo: 2010-02

Subject: Policy Regarding Eligible Individuals Serving Religious Missions
To: All Staff
From: Kyle Walker, Case Service Director
Date Issued: 04/01/2010
Effective Date: 04/01/2010

Purpose: The purpose of this Case Service Memo is to provide guidance and clarification regarding the handling of cases where the eligible individual chooses to interrupt vocational rehabilitation services in order to serve religious missions for a specified period of time. This policy supersedes any prior guidance or policy statements.

Policy Clarification: It is the position of USOR that religious and service missions provide comparable vocational and work hardening training enhancing skills such as self direction, self confidence, interpersonal communication, work appropriate dress, time and attendance, independence, accepting supervision, and other “soft skills”. Because of the nature of these activities USOR feels that this comparable benefit is a justifiable, vocationally related activity that when combined with other appropriately timed VR services can make eligible individuals more employable upon their return. For this reason USOR policy seeks to clarify process issues that will allow for seamless transitions that will lead to gainful employment.

In the event that an eligible individual chooses to serve a religious mission that would interrupt VR services for a specified period of time, the eligible individual and VR Counselor should assess the appropriate manner in which to proceed. Many factors should be assessed to provide the individual with informed choice at the time of application, in the planning for needed services, and at the time of the provision of services. These factors may include the date the individual intends to enter the mission, the amount of time needed to assess eligibility, conduct a comprehensive assessment, and develop an IPE, and the possible VR services that could be completed prior to departure. If the client is in status 02 and will be available for determination of eligibility, comprehensive assessment of rehabilitation need, and IPE development prior to initiating religious mission activity, the VR Counselor should expedite completion of these activities. If the eligible individual and VR Counselor develop and sign an IPE and the case is placed into status 12 or higher prior to their leaving for a mission the case is to be placed in status 24 “Program Interrupted” with no VR services being provided until the individual returns and is available for employment. If the eligible individual leaves for a mission prior to the development of an IPE (status 02 or 10) the case should be closed (status 08 or 30, as appropriate) and the individual informed that they must reapply upon their return. Cases held in status 24 due to the eligible individual being engaged in a religious mission for a specified and documented period of time do not require an annual review be completed until the individuals return.

Restrictions: At no time during the period that the eligible individual is unavailable for employment due to serving a religious mission should VR funds be expended that could be construed as providing support for the eligible individual to engage in the religious mission. Cases of eligible individuals with a signed plan are placed in status 24 with services resuming only upon their return and availability for employment. VR Counselors are encouraged to consult through supervisory channels when individual circumstances such as limited service missions where the individual is living at home and may be available for the completion of some VR services may be possible and appropriate.